

The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 24 October 1967



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DAILY BRIEF
24 OCTOBER 1967

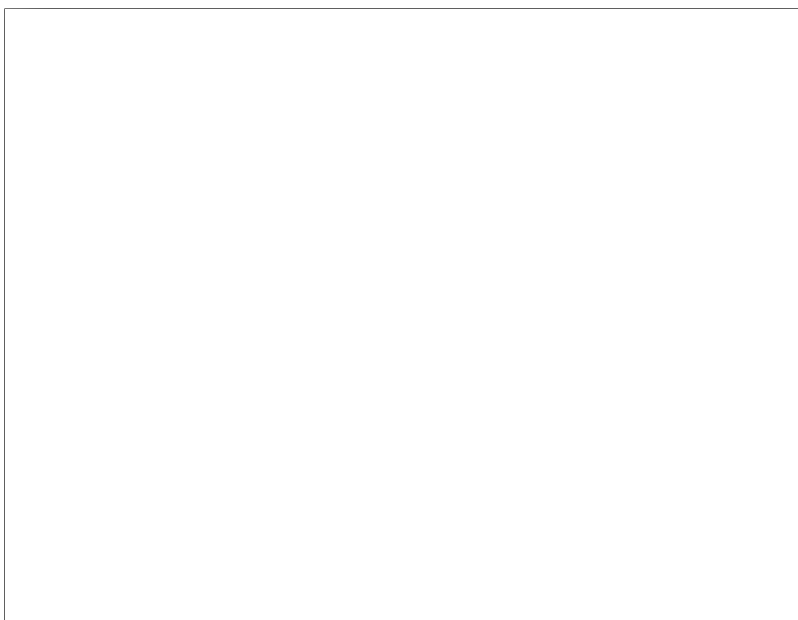
1. South Vietnam

Nearly complete, but unofficial, returns show Catholics doing well in the lower house elections. Catholic candidates (who will probably work well with Thieu) have taken about 20 percent of the seats. Official returns will be released on Thursday.

About 20 Buddhists have also won, but in most cases it is not known whether they are actively aligned with the militant or moderate factions of the Buddhist church. In Saigon, however, two of the winners are very probably connected with the militants.

Former province chiefs, army officers, and other officials--most of whom are likely to be friendly to the government--have also done well, and nearly 20 Constituent Assembly deputies have been returned. Ethnic Chinese swept all four of the seats in one Saigon electoral district.

2. North Vietnam



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3. Israel

Tel Aviv almost certainly feels its Navy has lost face, and that letting the Egyptian action go unavenged would encourage the Arabs to further military action. Any retaliatory action--and we think an air raid the most likely--would probably be against Egypt alone. The Israelis would probably prefer to strike the Egyptian Navy, but its ships are being dispersed. Air strikes against naval bases would be a logical second choice.

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4. Soviet Union

A major space event appears likely on 25 or 26 October.

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We believe the event canceled in September was a circumlunar flight with a return to earth landing. The Soviets will probably call the same play again, using an unmanned Soyuz capsule.

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5. India

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6. Soviet Union

Moscow seems to be encouraging Nigeria to ask for economic assistance.

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Lagos has not yet reacted officially. But we doubt that the Nigerians, who insist that the military assistance Moscow provided last summer was a purely commercial deal, are ready to accept economic assistance. This picture could change, however, if Nigeria's traditional sources of assistance falter in the aftermath of the war with Biafra.

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

Special Daily Report on North Vietnam



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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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Hanoi Prepares for Soviet Anniversary: North Vietnam is stepping up its activities in preparation for the Soviet Union's 50th anniversary next month, according to a recent Hanoi broadcast. An "emulation drive" has been launched within the armed forces and among the civilian population to record achievements in honor of the "grand date." A number of talks on the Russian Revolution have been held and many books on the subject have recently been published in North Vietnam. In addition, Hanoi has issued four commemorative stamps in honor of the occasion. North Vietnamese delegations have even been sent to the Soviet Union to attend seminars on the revolution.

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More Indonesian Accounts of Hanoi's Position:

The US embassies in Djakarta and Vientiane both have passed along accounts of Hanoi's position on negotiations from the Indonesian ambassador in North Vietnam. Both reports confirm earlier indications that the Indonesian ambassador is often imprecise in his analysis of Hanoi's actual stand on important matters. In one cable to his home office which was shown our ambassador to Djakarta by the Indonesian foreign minister, the Indonesian ambassador reported that Rumanian Premier Maurer on his recent trip to Hanoi received no reply when he inquired as to whether a cessation of US bombing would result in a reciprocal gesture from Hanoi. Yet the Indonesian told Ambassador Sullivan that Maurer received "positive" assurances that talks would take place soon if the bombing stopped.

In his 23 October conversation with US Ambassador Sullivan in Vientiane, the Indonesian ambassador to Hanoi claimed that North Vietnamese Premier Pham Van Dong and Foreign Minister Nguyen Duy Trinh had taken a hard line against negotiations with him in late September, but he veered back toward the standard Indonesian line that talks may yet be in the offing by telling Ambassador Sullivan that he saw some "nuances" in the Burchett article from Hanoi which he felt constituted "forward movement" on North Vietnam's part. The "nuances" he mentioned, however, turn out to be either misreadings of Burchett or insignificant semantic problems.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Further Hanoi Commentary on Antiwar Rally: A Hanoi broadcast on Sunday quoted "Western reports" stating that last weekend's demonstrations in Washington involved about 200,000 people and represented the largest antiwar rally in the US capital's history. The broadcast asserted that Washington was a "besieged city"--saying that it took 4,800 police and national guardsmen, 4,000 military police, and 6,000 paratroopers to suppress the demonstrators. It claimed that the Pentagon was turned into a "barbed wire-ringed fortress," but all "repressive measures" could not prevent the people from demonstrating against the US "dirty war" in Vietnam. The broadcast also reported that hundreds of thousands of demonstrators marched in protest against US "aggression" in European and Asian cities last Saturday.

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